

When My Mind is Renewed, Part 1 - Romans 12:16-17 – March 17th, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part one of a new series I've titled; "When My Mind is Renewed."
- The reason I chose this title is because the remainder of the chapter is such that, absent a renewed mind, there's no way I can be this way.
- More specifically, unless my mind has been renewed, and my life has been transformed, what Paul writes in this chapter will be impossible.

Of this one commentator writes, "Thinking words appear repeatedly in verse sixteen, as they did in verse three. The behavior of these verses will only be possible with a mind transformed into the thinking and values of the age to come."

- It's even evidenced by the prior verses where we studied a relatively long list of staccato style exhortations in verses nine through fifteen.

Romans 12:9-15 NIV Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. (10) Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. (11) Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. (12) Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. (13) Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. (14) Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. (15) Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

- Verse sixteen continues with the list, and as such, the common denominator is that they are all diametrically opposed to my human nature.
- In other words, the mind that's not renewed, and the life that's not transformed, will by a default of sorts do the exact opposite of all of them.
- I suppose you could say that a renewed mind is a prerequisite if we ever hope to experience all that the Holy Spirit inspires Paul to write.

- I would venture to say there's not likely to be a one of us who could honestly say that they don't want their lives to be like what's on this list.
- Namely, that of being sincere, good, devoted, loving, honoring, full of zeal, joyful, hopeful, patient, and hospitable, just to mention a few.
- Furthermore, as we'll see here with our first one that's found in verse sixteen, who of us doesn't want to live in harmony with one another?

1. I'll live in harmony with others (Verse 16)

(16) Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. -v16 Paul says we're to live in harmony with each other, and not be proud and conceited, but willing to associate with those in low positions.

- The truth of the matter is, when my mind has been renewed, it serves as a catalyst by which my life and relationships become harmonious.
- This because, humility replaces my pride, and in so doing, I'll become willing to associate with people of whom the world looks down upon.

James 2:1-4 NIV My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. (2) Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. (3) If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," (4) have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

Luke 14:7-11 NIV When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: (8) "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. (9) If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. (10) But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. (11) For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Stanley Voke, in his classic book, "Personal Revival," writes of this with tremendous insight. "The parable in Luke 14 about the man who sat in the wrong seat has always interested me. I imagine him arriving at the great wedding reception before most other guests and looking round hopefully for a seat. Presently seeing a comfortable one near the head of the table he decides on it. The guests arrive until all seats are filled except one – the lowest of all, which after a while is quietly taken by a man nobody appears to notice. Finally the host arrives and looking round the company calls for a distinguished person whose name everyone knows. To the surprise of all, he is found sitting in the lowest seat, whilst our friend who first arrived is discovered sitting in the very seat reserved for this important man. Imagine his confusion as he is told to give place to this man and finds to his shame that he must go down to the lowest seat of all. It may surprise us to know that we are all like this man because we all like to go up. ...We push for the best seats, we like to be given honor, to be treated with respect, to rise in the estimation of others. It is only natural! For most of us, however, it may be shown in negative ways in that we do not like to be passed over. Indeed, we may be resentful for years because we were not elected to some position or treated as we thought fit by someone else. ...Like that man in the parable, we think we have arrived ...so we sit contentedly in our chair of spiritual achievement."

2. I'll do what's right by others (Verse 17)

(17) Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

-v17 Paul writes how that we're not to repay anyone with evil when we've been the recipients of evil, but to do what's right by everybody.

- What I find interesting is how beautifully this ties into the previous verse, in that to live in harmony with others is to do what's right by others.
- When I do what's right by others, the result will be, I will not repay others with the evil that I myself have been the recipient of from others.

- The reason why is I start with the why, which for the benefit of those who weren't with us for that series, is a must for anything to change.

- The reason why I won't be proud and conceited and associate with people of low position is that I believe it will bring harmony into my life.

- The reason why I won't repay anyone evil for evil is because I truly believe that it is the right thing to do, which will bring peace into my life.

- This is both how and where I will bring today's sermon to a close, and in order to do that, I'll ask a question, one for which I ask of myself.

- Here it is, what is it that causes all of the fighting and striving in my life, and why is it that I never have any peace or harmony in my life?

- Indulge me as I read James 4:1-10, as herein lies that answer to this twofold question. Perhaps you'll let the Holy Spirit speak through it.